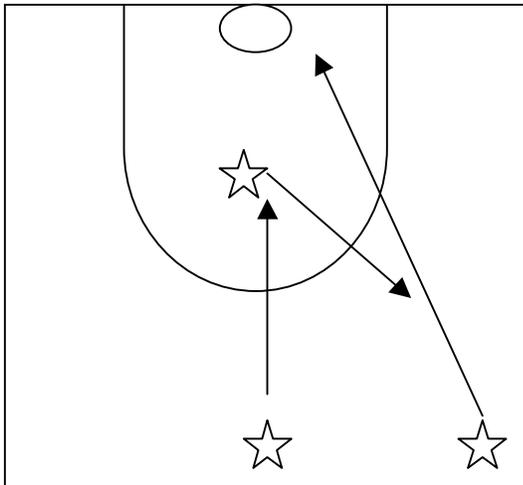


Controlling the Kids:

More and more I am told coaches are struggling to keep players under control during training. Problems include players not listening to instructions, not lining up when asked and showing an overall unwillingness to participate in drills set by the coach. This problem is understandable given most coaches are of school age with no experience in dealing with misbehaving kids. I am hesitant to give advice on this as I too have no qualifications or expertise in the area. As such, take the following only as a recommendation and if you have better suggestions from parents/teachers, by all means take this on board.

The first problem may be players aren't interested in training. If trainings are repetitive from week to week, players are forced to queue for their turn for too long and they are not been advised as to how they can improve their technique then players might choose not to participate. If this is the case, be sure to:

- Make training from week to week original. Perhaps add a new drill each week to challenge players and keep your sessions fresh. If you are running out of drills, there are hundreds at <http://www.jes-basketball.com> and a Google search will reveal hundreds more for all ages and abilities.
- Do not force players to queue for extended periods of times. If a player gets their turn every eight shots, they will get distracted in the line and muck-around. E.g. a lay up drill where players take one lay-up and then queue for eight other people to lay-it-up before their next turn will bore players. In stead, involve passing for the queuing players such as the Cincinnati drill below. As you can see, whilst there is only one player doing a lay-up at any one time, the lines are shortened by a few extra passers.



Setting it up: One line at the centre of the half way line with the ball. One line on the centre line to the right. One player on the foul line.

Running the drill: The player in the centre with the ball passes to the player on the foul line. The player on the foul line then passes to the player on the side line that is running in to do a lay up.

The players run to where they passed it to. I.e. the player in the centre who passed to the foul line moves to the foul line. The player on the foul line who passed it to the person laying it up moves to the back of the lay-up line. The person who layed-it-up moves to the centre line.

Repeat.

- Also, give players feedback as they go. For younger players this may involve explaining to them why they broke a rule when they did their lay-up, such as a travel. For the more advanced, this may involve commenting on their technique, such as their shooting technique. This will not only improve their game, but also let them know that the coach is interested and paying attention rather than just running players through the motions.

Whilst these tips should help, sometimes no matter how interesting, fresh and educational training sessions are there will always be a few players who continue to stuff-around.

I have always found it useful to sit those players down on the side-line for a couple of minutes.

Scenario: Players are asked to line up on the base line. A player continues to shoot deliberately (not because he didn't hear you). Tell the player to sit on the side for a couple of minutes for this.

The way in which this is done is crucial. It is not up to the coach to yell at a player or get mad and angry and make them feel bad or anything like that. Our job is to teach basketball. When a player is talking during your instructions, shooting when asked to come in etc, they are preventing you from teaching basketball. As such, ask them to sit down

so you can continue to teach basketball. After a few minutes, ask them "are you ready to play basketball now" and tell them to re-join.

Your attitude throughout the whole process is "I want to teach basketball. When a player stuffs-around, I don't really care, except it stops me from teaching basketball. So I will sit them down for a few minutes" This is distinctly different to what a parent, teacher or even the Super Nanny would do.

Don't be afraid to sit players down either. By threatening to sit them down ("next time you will have to sit down for that") you will build up the process as a big scary punishment routine they should be worried about.

The aim is to let players know that basketball is voluntary, and the whole reason you are there is to teach them the game. That is all you care about. At the end of the day, if a player doesn't want to play basketball it is not our job as coaches to force them to. If they don't want to play that's fine. Hopefully they will soon come to appreciate that you are there to help them and that they are, in fact, themselves there voluntarily!

In the unlikely event a more serious problem arises, we are not qualified nor required to deal with this (as all we are required to do is teach basketball). It is a policy of the club that a parent is present at each training session for this reason. For example:

- If a player refuses to sit on the sideline at your request: Don't get angry at the player or raise your voice, just walk over to the parent and tell them what has happened. The parents can deal with this.
- If a player begins crying: Tell the parent what happened and let them resolve the issue.
- If a player says they don't want to re-join when you ask if they want to play basketball again: Tell the parent to find a solution for this.

This all sounds a bit full on! If your players are keen participants who listen when you talk (such as an U/16 girls side) then this shouldn't concern you. If you are having trouble getting your players attention (such as an U/10 boys side) then have a think about employing some of these techniques.